1. (Previously Presented) For a data file distribution and processing system including server software running on a source computer for sending data files to a destination computer via a network link between the source computer and the destination computer, and including processing software running on the destination computer for processing each data file forwarded thereto from said server software to carry out an action, a method for preventing the processing software running on the destination computer from processing data files forwarded to the destination computer other than from the server software, the method comprising the steps of:

including within the server software running on the source computer license stamping means for embedding a license stamp into each data file before the server software forwards the data file to said destination computer via said network link; and

adapting said processing software executed by said destination computer so that it processes each received data file to carry out said action only when the received data file contains the embedded license stamp, wherein the license stamp embedded in the data file indicates that the data file was forwarded by licensed server software.

2. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said encoded license stamp comprises a code identifying said source computer.

3. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said each data file, including its embedded license stamp, is a print file defining a document in a format suitable for directly causing a printer to print said document.

4. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said license stamping means embeds said encoded

license stamp into each data file in such a way that said printer ignores the encoded license stamp when printing said document in response to said data file.

5. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises displaying on a computer monitor a representation of the document defined by the data file.

6. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises causing said printer to print said document.

7. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said data file defines a sound and wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises a initiating said sound.

8. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said data file defines a video image and wherein the action carried out by said processing software comprises initiating a display of said video image.

9. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said license stamping means also processes said data file to determine a value of an attribute of the data file and includes in said embedded license stamp an attribute code indicating said value of said attribute, and wherein the method further comprises the step of
adapting the processing software to process the data file to determine a value of said attribute of the data file, and to refrain from processing the data file to carry out said action unless the received data file includes an embedded license stamp containing said attribute code indicating a value of said

attribute matching the value of said attribute determined by said processing software.

10. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 9 wherein the data file processed by said license stamping means consists of a plurality of data bytes, each of which influences the value of said attribute determined by said license stamping means.

11. (Original) The method in accordance with claim 1
wherein said license stamping means includes a processing option code within said license stamp embedded within said data file, and
wherein the option code influences the nature of the output the processing software produces when processing the data file.

12. (Previously Presented) A data file distribution and processing system comprising:
a source computer;
a destination computer; and
network means for conveying data files from said source computer to said destination computer,
wherein said source computer executes server software for sending data files to the destination computer via said network means,
wherein said destination computer executes processing software for processing each data file forwarded thereto from said server software to carry out an action,
wherein said server software includes license stamping means for embedding a license stamp into each data file before the server software forwards the data file to said destination computer via said network means,
wherein said processing software processes each received data file to carry out said action only when the received data file contains the embedded license stamp, and

wherein the license stamp embedded in the data file indicates that the data file was forwarded by licensed server software.

13. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12 wherein said encoded license stamp comprises a code identifying said source computer.

14. (Previously Presented) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12 wherein each said data file, including its embedded license stamp, is a print file defining a document in a format suitable for directly causing a printer to print said document.

15. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 14 wherein said license stamping means embeds said encoded license stamp into the data file in such a way that said printer ignores the encoded license stamp when printing said document in response to said data file.

16. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system method in accordance with claim 14 wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises displaying on a computer monitor a representation of the document defined by the data file.

17. (Previously Presented) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 16 wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises causing said printer to print said document.

18. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12 wherein said data file defines

a sound and wherein said action carried out by said processing software comprises a initiating said sound.

19. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12 wherein said data file defines a video image and wherein the action carried out by said processing software comprises initiating a display of said video image.

20. (Currently Amended) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12
   wherein said license stamping means also processes each said data file to determine a value of an attribute of the data file and includes in said embedded license stamp an attribute code indicating said value of said attribute, and
   wherein ~~the method further comprises the step of adapting~~ the processing software ~~to process~~ processes each received data file to determine a value of said attribute of each data file received, and ~~to refrain~~ refrains from processing the received data file to carry out said action unless the received data file includes an embedded license stamp containing said attribute code indicating a value of said attribute matching the value of said attribute determined by said processing software.

21. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 20 wherein the data file processed by said license stamping means consists of a plurality of data bytes, each of which influences the value of said attribute determined by said license stamping means.

22. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 12

6

wherein said license stamping means includes a processing option code within said license stamp embedded within said data file, and

wherein the option code influences the nature of the output the processing software produces when processing the data file.

23. (Original) A data file distribution and processing system comprising:

first means for providing a data file;

second means for receiving the data file, for checking the data file to determine whether the data file contains an encoded license, and for thereafter processing the data file only when the data file contains the encoded license; and

third means for receiving the data file provided by said first means, for embedding said encoded license in the data file, and for forwarding said data file with the encoded license embedded therein to said second means, such that said encoded license indicates said data file as having been forwarded by said third means.

24. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 23 further comprising a printer,

wherein said data file provided by said first means is a print file suitable as input to said printer for instructing said printer to print a document, and

wherein said third means processes said data file by displaying an image of said document and by transmitting said data file as input to said printer such that said printer prints said document in response to said print file.

25. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 23 wherein said second means embeds said encoded license into the data file in such a way that

the printer ignores the encoded license when printing said document.

26. (Original) The data file distribution and processing system in accordance with claim 23 wherein said embedded license includes a code identifying a licensee.